1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map.

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapai, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira.

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa,

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1*s.* 6*d.* in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips.

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course

LANGUAGE

197 Nupe belongs to the Larger Unit[3] of Kwa languages of West Africa, which also includes the languages or dialects spoken by the Igbira, Igala, Idoma, and other peoples dealt with in this volume of the Ethnographic Survey.[4]

The Nupe Dialect Cluster together with those of Igbira and Gbari[5] make up the Nupe Language Group. But the Nupe are not linguistically homogeneous or exclusive. The bi-lingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai also speak Nupe, while some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe have lost their native tongue. The Kakanda are said to speak a closely related language which may be a Nupe dialect. Although Gbari is a separate dialect cluster of the Nupe Language Group much of its vocabulary is identical with Nupe, which also has a close structural resemblance to both Gbari and Kakanda.

The Nupe cluster consists of five markedly different dialects: Nupe proper; Ebe, spoken by the Ebe sub-tribe; Zitako or Dibo, more closely related to Gbari; Kupa, spoken by the Kupa and Cekpan sub-tribes; Basa-Nge, spoken by the Basa-Nge, a split-off section. The Gbedye sub-tribe are said to have spoken a separate dialect which is now lost. Nupe proper is spoken by the Kyedye sub-tribe and others and there are only insignificant dialectal differences between the areas where it is spoken. Bida Nupe ("higher Nupe") exhibits a fondness for Hausa words and phrases which have replaced many Nupe words. The other four dialects differ considerably from each other and from Nupe as spoken in the rest of the country, but most of the speakers of these dialects are bi-lingual and also speak Nupe proper.[5a]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

133 The Nupe country is low-lying and undulating, not more than 200 ft. above sea level in most parts. A few ridges of rocky hills and some flat-topped hillocks rise above the plain; the highest of these are not more than 800 ft. above sea level. On the banks of the Niger there are stretches of thick riverain forest alternating with shrub and low bush. During the rains, the forest-covered banks and the open bush are flooded far inland and become vast swamps.

The Niger and the Kaduna Rivers form the two axes of the country. A network of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, provides an efficient system of natural irrigation. Upstream from Jebba Island the Niger is narrow, with rapids and dangerous rocky passages. Between Jebba Island and Baro it is broad and navigable for big steamers for half the year.

134 The soil is mostly rich and fertile, especially in the thinly populated districts to the west of the Kaduna River. Round Bida town fertility has been much reduced by over-cultivation. The soil consists of red earth mixed with laterite and is rich in silicates. There is some iron ore which is mined by the natives on the slopes of the low broken hills.

137 The vegetation is typical for an area of transition from the southern forest belt to the northern savannah. Narrow strips or patches of thick forest vegetation lie in the river valleys and watercourses; inland, thick forest, shrub, and orchard bush alternate with open parkland, except round Bida and Agaie, where it has been cleared by intensive cultivation. There is virgin forest west of Kaduna.

Nupe country is the most northern area for oil-palm, yam, and the southern variety of maize; it is at the southern limit for date-palm, shea-nut, and millet. Other trees are: locust-bean, indigo, silk-cotton, mango (a European importation), kola-nut, and banana.[6]

[3] Westermann and Bryan, 1952, pp. 85-6. Their terminology is used here.
[4] See below, pp. 55-155.
[5] To be dealt with in a forthcoming volume of the Survey.
[5a] Nadel, 1942, pp. 13-14, 18, 23, 122; 1940, p. 165; Westermann, 1935; Meek, 1925, p. 137 (and map); Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 117, 320, 324.
[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 1; 1940a, p. 194.